

The Division of Forensic Science Firearm/Toolmark Section will follow to the maximum extent possible the Association of Firearm and Tool Mark Examiners (AFTE) Training Manual for the training of examiners

PREFACE

The following administrative guide is designed to help document all training provided to firearms examiner trainees and to provide documented evidence for a decision to certify a trainee as qualified to perform firearms and toolmark examinations or dismiss the trainee because of a failure to meet the training expectations.

It is presented as a guide and can be modified to meet local requirements concerning personnel, chain of command and participants in the process. It is not designed to be burdensome; however, if followed this guide will provide a high level of confidence for higher administration in the fair and complete training the person has received and as a bonus should be an encouragement to the trainee documenting their accomplishments.

The AFTE Training Manual Committee invites your comments concerning this product and others it has set forth. Our mutual goal is to maintain the high standards of training that has come to be expected of AFTE and its membership.

**AFTE FIREARMS IDENTIFICATION
EXAMINER TRAINING AND CERTIFICATION PROGRAM**

The following program provides the structure, administrative guidelines and documentation requirements for Firearms examiner training and certification. Execution of this program will be the responsibility of the Laboratory Director, the Firearms Section Chief, and the Firearms Training Officer and they will constitute the foundation for the final qualification of Firearms examiner trainees. This qualification will be based on the administration and documentation of individualized training programs tailored and structured according to the needs of each trainee. This process will provide a flexible and efficient approach for assimilating individuals new to the discipline, experienced and court-qualified examiners from outside agencies, individuals from academia, as well as examiner trainees selected from currently onboard personnel of potentially widely varying experience levels. This process is designed to be broad in scope but can be tailored to be laboratory specific. The following training milestones constitute the framework for tracking the training process over a maximum two-year period and assessing the results in a methodical manner. Each will be discussed in regard to administration and documentation in the detailed sections that follow.

TRAINING MILESTONES

- a) Evaluation and assessment of each trainee's previous training and experience
- a) 30-Day progress reviews
- a) Proficiency testing
- a) External training (*Specialized schools and factory visits*)
- a) Written testing
- a) Technical oral boards
- a) Moot courts
- a) Completion of required sections of unit training syllabus
- a) Administrative oral board
- a) Qualification and certification
- a) Technical paper, including presentation to AFTE, Final Notebook Review

GRADING/DOCUMENTATION

- To be completed by Training Officer for the Firearms Section Chief and Laboratory Director
- To be completed by the Training Officer for the Firearms Section Chief
- Pass/fail
- Documented completion by certificate or trip memorandum
- Pass/fail
- Pass/fail
- Pass/fail
- Documented completion in the syllabus
- Pass/fail
- To be completed by Firearms Section Chief and Laboratory Director

It is noted that failing twice in any single critical area (milestones C, E, F, G or I) or failure to successfully reach all milestones within two years will constitute reason for removal from the examiner training program. Resolution of such cases will rest with a committee consisting of the Firearms Section Chief, the Firearms Training Officer, and the Laboratory Director. New employees may be subject to dismissal under a probationary appointment agreement and current employees may be removed from the examiner training program and revert to a position held prior to acceptance in the examiner training program based on current personnel policies.

A. EVALUATION AND ASSESSMENT OF TRAINEE'S PREVIOUS TRAINING AND EXPERIENCE

Administration - Each individual attaining trainee status, whether previously court qualified or not, will have their previous training, experience, education, published articles and other credentials reviewed by the Firearms Section Chief and the Training Officer. The thrust of this evaluation will be to establish a base line in regard to the trainee's technical knowledge, skills and abilities. Data previously gathered in the selection process will be considered along with other inputs from detailed interviews of the trainee. The Firearms Section Chief and Training Officer will compare the previous training and experience of the trainee with the contents of the unit training syllabus. The knowledge gaps identified will become the basis for a training plan tailored to the trainee's needs, and serve to specify those portions of the unit-training syllabus, which must be addressed.

It should be noted that any portion of the Firearms training syllabus not included in the individual trainee's plan must be justified by appropriate proficiency testing, verification of previous schools attended, etc.

Documentation - Documentation will consist of a memorandum setting out the Individual Training Plan (ITP) with an attached chart of unit-specific training milestones.

- a. Memorandum - The Training Officer will generate an ITP in the form of a memorandum to the Firearms Section Chief. This plan will articulate the following as a minimum:
- Portions of the training syllabus which will be addressed by the trainee.
 - Portions of the training syllabus which will not be included in the ITP, along with:
 - a. Justification for exclusion, such as past experience, schools attended, etc.
 - b. Proficiency or other testing to validate the above exclusion.
 - c. Estimated completion dates (*closest month*) for milestones.
 - These goal dates May be modified if necessary.
 - Categories of proficiency tests to be employed during training.
 - Incidental participation by all qualified examiners, appropriate support personnel
 - In uniquely Unit-related administrative matters.
 - Timely exposure to unit-specific manuals, to include:
 - a. Administrative Manuals
 - b. Safety and Chemical Hygiene Manuals
 - c. Protocol Manuals
 - d. Quality Control Manuals
 - Detailed plans and expectations in regard to milestones "A" through "L".
 - Grading system for each milestone item.
- b. Chart - As a management and tracking tool, the Training Officer will generate a one page chart reflecting a chronological checklist of training milestones. All required milestones will be included. This chart will be included as an attachment to each ITP and will set out the following data categories:

**TRAINING
MILESTONES**

**PLANNED COMPLETION
(MONTH)**

**ACTUAL COMPLETION
(MONTH)**

B. 30-DAY PROGRESS REVIEWS

Administration - Each trainee's progress will be reviewed every 30-days by the Firearms Section Chief and the Training Officer. All training activities and milestones as set out in the trainee's individual training plan will be reviewed and commented on.

Documentation - The results of the 30-day progress review will be documented on the form that follows.

30-DAY PROGRESS REVIEW

In accordance with their ITP, each student will be required to maintain daily written documentation for the activities in which they participated in during their training cycle. A copy of the documentation for each week will be attached to this 30-Day Progress Review.

TRAINEE: _____

DATE OF REVIEW: _____

FIREARMS SECTION CHIEF: _____

TRAINING OFFICER: _____

TOPICS COVERED THIS MONTH: _____

CASES TRAINED ON BY ADVANCED
TRAINEES (*LIST CASE FILE NUMBER*): _____

PROFICIENCY TESTS: _____

SPECIALIZED SCHOOLS/FACTORY VISITS: _____

WRITTEN TESTS: _____

ORAL BOARDS: _____

MOOT COURTS: _____

TRAINING SYLLABUS: _____

NOTEBOOK: _____

QUALIFICATION AND CERTIFICATION: _____

C. PROFICIENCY TESTING

- Administration** - Each trainee will be required to pass a series of mandatory proficiency tests for each sub-discipline for which they will be expected to perform examinations. These will be administered by the Training Officer in order to track and evaluate the individual during actual training, as well as to validate and justify portions of the training syllabus to be excluded from the individual training plan generated during initial evaluation and assessment of the trainee's level of expertise.

- Documentation** - The result of each graded proficiency test will be recorded on the following form for retention in the trainee's Individual Firearms training folder. A printed version of the test presented to the trainee should also be attached to the form, along with the trainee's notes or documentation of their efforts.

PROFICIENCY TEST RECORD

TRAINEE: _____

DATE: _____

PROFICIENCY TEST NO. _____

TOPIC: _____

RESULTS: Pass /Fail (*circle one*)

CHECKLIST FOR ATTACHED DOCUMENTATION:

* Test statement _____

* Materials provided to trainee _____

* Notes or documentation of trainee _____

* Trainees results _____

* Evaluation of results by Training Officer _____

D. EXTERNAL TRAINING (Specialized schools/factory visits):

Administration - Where participation in the specialized schools and/or factory visits is a requirement of a unit's training, these must be successfully completed and documented.

Documentation - The Training Officer for inclusion in the individual's Firearms training folder will document the trainee's successful completion of required specialized schools and/or factory visits on the following form.

EXTERNAL TRAINING RECORD
SPECIALIZED SCHOOL/FACTORY VISIT

TRAINEE: _____

SCHOOL/LOCATION: _____

FACTORY/LOCATION: _____

DATES: _____

RESULTS: (*Successful completion*) _____

CHECKLIST FOR ATTACHED DOCUMENTATION:

* Copy of the certificate (*school*) _____

* Copy of trip memos (*factory visit*) _____

E. WRITTEN TESTING

Administration - In written testing included as a facet of a unit's training, it will be essential to formulate test items with due regard to the following criteria:

- a. Job relevance (*validity*)
- a. Reliability
- b. Clarity

Tests will consist of carefully screened test items, which must be evaluated against the above criteria prior to being administered to a trainee by the Training Officer. Passing score will be 80%.

Documentation - The trainee's performance in each administered written test will be documented on the following form by the Training Officer for inclusion in the individual's unit training folder.

WRITTEN TESTING RECORD

TRAINEE: _____

DATE: _____

WRITTEN TEST NO: _____

TOPIC: _____

SCORE: _____

RESULTS: Pass / Fail (*circle one*)

CHECKLIST FOR ATTACHED DOCUMENTATION:

* Copy of test _____

* The trainee's answer sheet _____

* Notes regarding scoring of test _____

F. TECHNICAL ORAL BOARDS

Administration - Oral boards will be held in regard to each logical subcategory of the work to be performed by the examiner trainee, with a minimum of three for each trainee. These oral boards will be structured for the purposes of developing, testing and evaluating the trainee's technical, scientific and institutional knowledge. They will provide a feedback mechanism for the trainee if they require reinforcement in any area prior to a moot court in that area. Key elements of the oral board series will be as follows:

- a. Attendance will include all available qualified Firearms examiners, all available trainees, the Firearms Section Chief (*if available*) and the Training Officer.
- b. Subject matter for a particular oral board session can be specific or wide-ranging and cumulative over an entire training area.
- c. Sessions should be conducted to develop and highlight the trainee's oral presentation skills. Sessions should be 1-2 hours in length.
- d. Post session critiques which will include all the attendees including other firearms trainees

Documentation - The Training Officer for inclusion in the individual's unit training folder will document the trainee's performance in each oral board session on the following form.

TECHNICAL ORAL BOARD RECORD

TRAINEE: _____

DATE: _____

ORAL BOARD NO: _____

TOPIC: _____

<u>VOTING ATTENDEES:</u>	<u>PASS/FAIL</u>	<u>COMMENTS</u>
Section Chief:	_____	_____
Training Officer:	_____	_____
Qualified Examiners:	_____	_____
	_____	_____
	_____	_____
	_____	_____
	_____	_____
	_____	_____
	_____	_____

NON-VOTING ATTENDEES:

(It is noted that a passing grade in the context of an oral board will be based on a majority of the voting members present. At least half of the unit's qualified examiners must be present, along with the Firearms Section Chief and Training Officer.)

TECHNICAL ORAL BOARD RECORD

TRAINEE: _____

DATE: _____

ORAL BOARD NO: _____

TOPIC: _____

<u>VOTING ATTENDEES:</u>	<u>PASS/FAIL</u>	<u>COMMENTS</u>
Section Chief:	_____	_____
Training Officer:	_____	_____
Qualified Examiners:	_____	_____
	_____	_____
	_____	_____
	_____	_____
	_____	_____
	_____	_____
	_____	_____

NON-VOTING ATTENDEES:

(It is noted that a passing grade in the context of an oral board will be based on a majority of the voting members present. At least half of the unit's qualified examiners must be present, along with the Firearms Section Chief and Training Officer.)

MOOT COURT RECORD

TRAINEE: _____
DATE: _____
MOOT COURT NO: _____
TOPIC: _____
DATE OF PREVIOUS
RELATED ORAL BOARD: _____

<u>VOTING ATTENDEES:</u>	<u>PASS/FAIL</u>	<u>COMMENTS</u>
Firearms Section Chief:	_____	_____
Training Officer:	_____	_____
Lab Director:	_____	_____
<i>(Last moot court)</i>		
Qualified Examiners:	_____	_____
	_____	_____
	_____	_____
	_____	_____
	_____	_____
	_____	_____

NON-VOTING ATTENDEES:

(It is noted that a passing grade in the context of a moot court will be based on a majority of the voting members present. At least half of the unit's qualified examiners must be present, along with the Training Officer and Firearms Section Chief. The Laboratory Director will attend the final moot court and may exercise a veto if deemed appropriate.)

H. COMPLETION OF TRAINING SYLLABUS

Administration - All portions of the training syllabus must be completed by the trainee prior to qualification and certification, except for those sections specifically excluded in the trainee's individual training plan, and justified therein based on early Proficiency or other testing during initial stages of the training process.

Documentation - A photocopy of the final sign-off page(s) of the trainee's copy of the training syllabus will be placed in the trainee's Firearms training folder. This should reflect, as a minimum, the signatures of the Training Officer, the Firearms Section Chief, all qualified Firearms examiners, and the Laboratory Director.

I. ADMINISTRATIVE ORAL BOARD

Administration - All trainees will be required to pass an oral board in regard to Firearms Section and Laboratory administrative policies and procedures. Content of these oral boards will include but not be limited to topics such as the following:

- a. Mission
- b. Organizational structure of the unit, section, division and department
- c. Goals and objectives of the unit, section, division and department
- d. Statistical accomplishments
- e. Performance appraisal system
- f. Request for reexamination
- g. Liaison with other agencies
- h. Contacts with the media
- i. Laboratory capabilities
- j. Physical security
- k. EEO matters
- l. Case administration
- m. Time and attendance
- n. Ethics
- o. Employee assistance programs

Documentation -The trainee's performance in this oral board session will be documented on the following form by the Training Officer and Firearms Section Chief for inclusion in the individual's Firearms training folder.

ADMINISTRATIVE ORAL BOARD RECORD

TRAINEE: _____

DATE: _____

ORAL BOARD NO: _____

TOPIC: Administrative Matters

VOTING ATTENDEES: PASS/FAIL COMMENTS

Firearms Section Chief: _____

Training Officer: _____

Qualified Examiners: _____

NON-VOTING ATTENDEES:

(It is noted that a passing grade in the context of an oral board will be decided by a majority of the voting members present. At least half of the qualified examiners must be present, along with the Firearms Section Chief and Training Officer.)

J. QUALIFICATION AND CERTIFICATION

Administration - A trainee will be nominated for qualification and certification only upon completion of those milestones "A" through "I" as specified in the trainee's individual training plan generated by the Training Officer at the initiation of training. It is noted that the Firearms training syllabus provides that all qualified Firearms examiners must concur in regard to the trainee's state of readiness before the process goes forward.

Documentation - Completion of training will be documented in a summary

memorandum generated by the Firearms Section Chief through the chain of command to the Laboratory Director. It will set out the details of the individual's training by citing completion of all milestones identified in the trainee's Individual Training Plan, and will recommend qualification and certification by the Laboratory Director. A copy of the memorandum will be designated for the individual's Firearms training folder.

K. FINAL NOTEBOOK REVIEW

Administrative - Each trainee will be required to maintain a personal notebook in format paralleling their training syllabus. Each section will reflect research and notes relating to the corresponding section of the syllabus.

Documentation - The following form will be used by the Training Officer and Firearms Section Chief to document a satisfactory level of accomplishment in the notebook kept by each trainee.

FINAL NOTEBOOK REVIEW

TRAINEE: _____

DATE: _____

APPROVALS:

Training Officer: _____

Firearms Section Chief: _____